(sheet). However, in a preferred embodiment, the material used for thermally isolating interface 108 is any common form of stainless steel.

In the Claims:

Marked up versions of all revised claims, showing insertions and deletions, are included in Appendix B. A clean copy of the claims that will be pending upon entry of the instant amendment is included in Appendix C.

Please cancel claims 3 and 4.

Please amend the following claims.

1. (Amended) An apparatus through which a substrate is transferred between a first vacuum chamber and a second vacuum chamber, wherein said first vacuum chamber is maintained at a high temperature relative to a temperature maintained within said second vacuum chamber, said second vacuum chamber including a port; said apparatus comprising:

a passageway for receiving said substrate; and

a thermally isolating interface that reduces heat transfer from said first vacuum chamber to said second vacuum chamber, said thermally isolating interface allowing for transfer of said substrate between said ~~apparatus~~ first vacuum chamber and said second vacuum chamber, said thermally isolating interface having a face with a border disposed on said face, the border defining a hole in said thermally isolating interface having dimensions such that said substrate is transferrable through said thermally isolating interface;

wherein said thermally isolating interface is made of metal having a thermal conductivity coefficient of less than 1536 Btu inch/(hr)(ft^2)(°F) and wherein said first vacuum chamber, said apparatus, and said second chamber are sealed together to form a closed environment having an internal pressure that is less than standard atmospheric pressure.

2. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said first vacuum chamber is a heat chamber or a high temperature processing chamber and said second vacuum chamber is a transfer chamber.

5. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said thermally isolating interface is made of stainless steel.

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6. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said thermally isolating interface is composed of a stainless steel having a thermal conductivity coefficient of about 106 Btu inch/(hr)(ft^2)(°F).

13. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said passageway further comprises a heating element for maintaining said apparatus at a temperature that is proximate to said high temperature.

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14. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said heating element comprises a heater that is encased in a metal shape.

20. (Amended) An apparatus through which a substrate is transferred between a first vacuum chamber and a second vacuum chamber, wherein said first vacuum chamber is maintained at a high temperature relative to a temperature maintained in said second vacuum chamber, said second vacuum chamber including a port; said apparatus comprising:

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a passageway for receiving said substrate; and

a stainless steel interface that reduces heat transfer from said first vacuum chamber to said second vacuum chamber, said stainless steel interface allowing for transfer of said substrate between said apparatus and said second chamber, said stainless steel interface having a face with a border disposed on said face, the border defining a hole in said stainless steel interface having dimensions such that said substrate is transferrable through said stainless steel interface;

wherein said first vacuum chamber, said apparatus, and said second chamber are sealed together to form a closed environment having an internal pressure that is less than standard atmospheric pressure.

21. (Amended) An apparatus through which a substrate is transferred between a first vacuum chamber and a second vacuum chamber, wherein said first vacuum chamber is

maintained at a high temperature relative to an ambient temperature of said second vacuum chamber, said second vacuum chamber including a port; said apparatus comprising:

a passageway for receiving said substrate, said passageway including a heating element for maintaining said apparatus at a temperature that is proximate to said high temperature; and

an interface that reduces heat transfer from said first vacuum chamber to said second vacuum chamber, said interface allowing for transfer of said substrate between said apparatus and said second vacuum chamber, said interface having a face with a border disposed on said face, the border defining a hole in said interface having dimensions such that said substrate is transferrable through said interface;

wherein said thermally isolating interface is made of metal having a thermal conductivity coefficient of less than 1536 Btu inch/(hr)(ft^2)(°F) and wherein said first vacuum chamber, said apparatus, and said second chamber are sealed together to form a closed environment having an internal pressure that is less than standard atmospheric pressure.